

Modals of Deduction (must, might, can't) – Test 1

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ Score: / 30



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Choose the correct option (A, B, C or D) for each question.

Part 1: Meaning – how sure are you?

Read each sentence and choose the modal that best fits the situation, or choose the sentence with the closest meaning.

- Lena has been working for twelve hours without a break. She _____ be exhausted.
A must B can't C might not D mustn't
- That _____ be Tom at the door. He's on holiday in Spain this week.
A can't B must C might D should
- I'm not sure where Amir is. He _____ be in the library, or perhaps he's gone home.
A might B must C can't D has to
- The lights are off and nobody is answering the phone. They _____ be out.
A must B can't C should D need
- You've just eaten a huge pizza! You _____ be hungry again already!
A can't B must C might D mustn't
- Take an umbrella. It _____ rain later – the sky is looking a bit grey.
A might B must C can't D mustn't
- Which sentence has the closest meaning to 'Sofia can't be at work today'?
A I'm sure Sofia isn't at work today. B Sofia isn't allowed to be at work today.
C Perhaps Sofia isn't at work today. D Sofia doesn't want to be at work today.
- Which sentence has the closest meaning to 'The keys might be in the car'?
A It's possible the keys are in the car. B I'm certain the keys are in the car.
C The keys should always be in the car. D The keys are never in the car.
- Jae-won speaks Japanese, Korean and Chinese. He _____ be very good at languages.
A must B can't C might not D couldn't
- This bag _____ be Maria's. Hers is red, and this one is blue.
A can't B must C may D might

Part 2: Form – negatives, questions and continuous forms

Choose the grammatically correct option.

- Daniel isn't answering his messages. He must _____ a film at the cinema.
A be watching B to watch C watching D watches
- She _____ be at home. I can hear music from her flat.
A must B musts C must to D is must

13. Choose the correct sentence.

- A** They might not know about the meeting.
C They might don't know about the meeting.

- B** They don't might know about the meeting.
D They mightn't to know about the meeting.

14. Choose the correct sentence.

- A** He can't be serious!
C He doesn't can be serious!

- B** He can't to be serious!
D He can't being serious!

15. Someone is knocking. Who ——— it be at this time of night?

- A** could **B** must **C** does **D** is

16. ——— it really be true? I don't believe it!

- A** Can **B** Must **C** Is **D** Does

17. Look at the queue! The new café ——— very popular.

- A** must be **B** must is **C** must being **D** must to be

18. Kofi isn't in his office. He ——— having lunch, but I'm not sure.

- A** may be **B** may **C** maybe **D** may is

19. 'I'm sure the shop isn't open now – it's midnight.' Which sentence means the same?

- A** The shop can't be open now. **B** The shop mustn't be open now.
C The shop might not be open now. **D** The shop can't is open now.

20. You think 'She must be tired' is wrong and you are sure the opposite is true. What do you say?

- A** She can't be tired. **B** She mustn't be tired.
C She doesn't must be tired. **D** She must not to be tired.

Part 3: Reading and use in context

Read the dialogue and answer questions 21–24. Then answer questions 25–30.

Priya and Marco are tidying up at the end of the day in their small café.

Priya: Look, someone has left a phone on the table by the window.

Marco: It can't be Mr Okafor's. He always sits at the counter, and his phone is much older than this one.

Priya: True. There's a student card under it, too. It might belong to one of the students who were here this afternoon.

Marco: The phone is still warm, so the owner must be quite close. They can't have left more than a few minutes ago.

Priya: Wait – it's ringing. The screen says 'Mum'. It must be the owner's mother.

Marco: Answer it! She might know where her son or daughter is.

21. How sure is Marco that the phone isn't Mr Okafor's?

- A** He is certain. **B** He thinks it's possible.
C He has no idea. **D** He thinks it's probably his.

22. When Priya says 'It might belong to one of the students', she means that...

- A** it's possible the phone is a student's.
B she knows the phone is a student's.
C the phone definitely isn't a student's.
D students are not allowed to leave phones.

23. Why is Marco sure that the owner must be quite close?
- A** Because the phone is still warm. **B** Because the phone is ringing.
C Because there is a student card. **D** Because Mr Okafor sits at the counter.
24. Which sentence from the dialogue is a deduction about the past?
- A** They can't have left more than a few minutes ago.
B It must be the owner's mother.
C It might belong to one of the students.
D The owner must be quite close.
25. Which part of this sentence is wrong? 'You mustn't be cold – you're wearing three jumpers!'
- A** mustn't **B** be **C** you're wearing **D** three jumpers
26. Which part of this sentence is wrong? 'That man must to be the new manager – he's wearing a suit and giving orders.'
- A** must to be **B** the new manager **C** he's wearing **D** giving orders
27. The ground is wet this morning. It _____ last night.
- A** must have rained **B** must rain **C** must rained **D** must be rain
28. I sent Tariq the address, but he hasn't arrived yet. He _____ my message.
- A** might not have read **B** mustn't read
C can't read **D** might not read
29. A: Hiro has bought a new car and a big house this year. B: _____
- A** He must earn a lot of money. **B** He can't earn a lot of money.
C He mustn't earn a lot of money. **D** He must earning a lot of money.
30. A: I can't find my glasses anywhere. B: _____
- A** They might be in your bag – have you looked there?
B They must be in your bag – I have no idea.
C They can't be in your bag – maybe check there.
D They mightn't to be in your bag.

Answer key – Modals of Deduction (must, might, can't) – Test 1

1 A	2 A	3 A	4 A	5 A	6 A	7 A	8 A	9 A	10 A
11 A	12 A	13 A	14 A	15 A	16 A	17 A	18 A	19 A	20 A
21 A	22 A	23 A	24 A	25 A	26 A	27 A	28 A	29 A	30 A

Explanations

- A** – Twelve hours without a break makes us sure she is tired, so we use must.
- A** – Tom is in Spain, so we are sure it is not him: can't.
- A** – The speaker is not sure, so we use might for possibility.
- A** – The evidence makes the speaker confident they are out, so must is correct.
- A** – We are sure the opposite is true, so we use can't; mustn't means prohibition, not deduction.
- A** – A slightly grey sky only shows a possibility, so might is correct.
- A** – Can't in deduction means the speaker is sure something is not true.
- A** – Might expresses possibility, not certainty or obligation.
- A** – Speaking three languages is strong evidence, so we are sure: must.
- A** – Maria's bag is a different colour, so we are sure it isn't hers: can't.
- A** – For an action happening now, we use must + be + -ing.
- A** – Modal verbs never take -s and are followed directly by the base form.
- A** – The negative is modal + not + base form, with no do and no to.
- A** – Can't is followed by the base form be, without to or -ing.
- A** – In questions about possibility we usually use could (or can), not must.
- A** – Can it be true? is a common question expressing surprise or doubt.
- A** – Must is followed by the base form be.
- A** – May be (two words) is modal + verb; maybe (one word) is an adverb and cannot be used here.
- A** – Can't be expresses negative certainty; mustn't is for rules, and might not is only a possibility.
- A** – The opposite of must for deduction is can't, not mustn't.
- A** – Marco uses can't, which shows he is sure it is not Mr Okafor's phone.
- A** – Might shows possibility, not certainty.
- A** – Marco says the phone is still warm, so this is his evidence for must.
- A** – Can't have + past participle is used for deductions about the past.
- A** – For negative deduction we use can't; mustn't means it is not allowed.
- A** – We never use to after must: it should be must be.
- A** – For a confident deduction about the past we use must have + past participle.
- A** – This is a possible explanation about the past, so we use might not have + past participle.
- A** – Expensive purchases are strong evidence, so must + base form is the logical response.
- A** – B is suggesting a possibility, so might fits; the other options are illogical or ungrammatical.

Notes for teachers: Use this test after presenting modals of deduction, or as a diagnostic before revision. It targets typical B1 errors: using mustn't instead of can't for negative deduction, adding to after a modal, confusing maybe and may be, and choosing must when the evidence only suggests a possibility. As a follow-up, ask students to look at photos or describe mystery objects and make their own deductions with must, might and can't.